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**THIRD MEETING OF THE AD-HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE REVISION OF THE ECTS USERS’ GUIDE**

**Brussels, 28 May 2013, 09:00 – 17:00**

**Draft minutes**

**List of participant**

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| **Country/ Organisation** | **Representative** |
| Armenia | Nerses Gevorgyan |
| Austria | Regine Bolter |
| BFUG Secretariat | Marta Simonyan |
| Belgium | Luc François |
| EC | Adam Tyson |
| EC | Margie Waters |
| EC | Daphne Scherer |
| ENQA | Maria Kelo |
| EUA | Davies Howard |
| EURASHE | Sandra Kraze |
| Germany | Volker Gehmlich |
| France | Béatrice Delpouve |
| Hungary | Judit Hidasi |
| Italy | Maria Sticchi Damiani |
| Lithuania | Raimonda Markeviciene |
| Moldova | *Apologies* |
| Sweden | Janerik Lundquist |
| UK | Anthony Vickers |
| Ukraine |  |

1. ***Opening***

* ***Welcome by Adam Tyson (Head of Unit “Higher Education, Modernisation Agenda; Erasmus”, DG EAC)***
* ***Objectives of meeting, agenda, administrative issues***
* ***Adoption of the Minutes of the 2nd meeting***

Mr. Adam Tyson (EC), the Chair of the Ad-hoc working group (WG) on the Revision of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) Users’ Guide welcomed the participants to the third meeting of the WG. The Chair presented the agenda of the meeting, which was adopted without any amendments.

Ms. Marta Simonyan (BFUG Secretariat) informed on the request received from a UK Bologna expert regarding transparency of information related to the revision of the ECTS Users’ Guide. Members of the group discussed the issue and it was decided that the Secretariat will prepare a work plan of the WG and publish it on the public area of the EHEA website.

The minutes of the second meeting of the WG were adopted without any amendments.

1. ***Presentation of the group 3 on “Mobility”***

Ms. Raimonda Markeviciene (Lithuania) presented the results of the activities of the 3rd subgroup. She clarified how the topic of “mobility” was reflected in the ECTS Users’ Guide, the issues that are not covered in the current version together with the proposed changes. Moreover the academic consequences for those students who failed to achieve credits were described. As a conclusion, she stressed that many problems related to mobility have to do with proper interpretation and implementation by the HEIs.

More information is available in the PowerPoint below.

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The following questions and comments were made afterwards:

* Existence of various types of grading, often not explained in the mobility documents, and difficulties in calculating/comparing grades;
* The need for the updated guide to provide a precise definition of LLL and guidance on credit accumulation;
* Ensure quality of same degree education programmes across EHEA countries;
* Need to clearly understand what mobility is: whether it is a physical exchange or something more including exchange of grades and practices;
* The Guide will also need to address new types of mobility (LLL, part-time mobility, thesis mobility, etc.); it is also important that HEIs have some principles agreed for these
* Mobility needs to be a usual process not an extraordinary thing in the universities, in order to reach the benchmark of 20% mobility across EHEA;
* Learning agreements should be part of academic recognition.

It was decided that the comments made by the participants will be considered in the revised guide.

1. ***Discussion on how to reflect issues around “Mobility” in revised guide***

The participants divided into 3 groups:

* Mobility documents;
* Institutional role and double degrees;
* Grading.

The group discussions made the following points:

Group 1: *Mobility documents:*

* The need for additional clarifications and update of the course catalogue, including e.g. on the occupational profiles of graduates;
* The learning agreement should be used for all types of mobility including for study and placements, which is already in the guide:
* Added value of a common format for an application, learning agreement and transcript of records;
* The need for clarification of the information included in the transcript of records in order to facilitate the recognition process;
* The language barrier of the course catalogue should be taken into consideration.
* To note that documents in Annex 4 will not be bundled inside the Guide but will be on the web (to enable easy updates)

Group 2: Recognition and grading:

* Good partners can help ensure smoother recognition; this should be kept in mind as a criterion for selection of the partnership, as quality assurance at the host HEI is a basis for recognition.
* There is no guarantee of recognition if there is no learning agreement agreed in advance;
* Recognition should relate to all types of mobility that are structured in the curriculum, and should count towards degree (included in the DS);
* Principles for recognition of prior experience should be included in the Guide
* Learning agreement should be signed by the academic staff empowered/appointed by the academic body;
* The grading system should be in the text not in appendix. Grading tables (not conversion tables) need to be developed and statistical distribution must be emphasised.

Group 3: Institutional role and double degrees:

* If two institutions agree on the academic programme, it is recognisable; in case of a consortium of HEIs establishing a joint or double degrees, there must be a written consortium agreement setting out all the principles agreed upon by the consortium members;
* Problems of recognition of short mobility cycles.

More comments were made during the plenary discussions:

* The revised guide should contain a section on joint-degrees describing allocation of credits;
* The need to clarify that learning agreements are needed for all types of mobility activities that are part of a study programme
* There is no need for learning agreements for JD & JP, which should instead be based on consortium agreements and ECTS have to be used properly in the design of the programme
* Whether there is a need for additional documents from the institutions;
* Recognition practices between institutions related to learning agreements need to be specified;
* The principle of the revised guide should be flexibility in order to reflect all types of mobility;
* National interpretations of the revised guide need to be improved to minimize various interpretations;
* Learning agreement needs to be signed by the academic staff having the authority to recognise it (same person in charge of signing the learning agreement and recognising the transcript of records).

1. ***Presentation of group 4 on “Transparency tools”***

Ms. Maria Kelo (ENQA) and Mr. Howard Davies (EUA) presented the results of the work of the fourth subgroup (see structure of the presentation in the document below).



The presentation focused on 3 main issues:

* the implications for the Guide of a broadened range of users (e.g. companies, regulated professions, QAAs, etc.)
* the link with the ESG
* ensure that links to other transparency tools are properly referenced in the Guide

There is a need to identify the core and other potential users of the Guide and it was suggested that the introduction sets out who are the potential users (students, academic staff, HEI administrators dealing with mobility issues, schools, regulatory bodies, employers, etc.) and explain that the list is not an exclusive one. It is also important to suit the text of the Guide with these stakeholders in mind and address how they can relate to it in practice. Further links / separate pathways can also be added for specific stakeholder groups.

The process of the ESG revision was also presented QA should be covered in the Guide when addressing transparency of programmes, recognition procedures and programme design. QA processes should be in place to ensure that programmes are designed in a transparent way, using ECTS in conformity with the Guide and appeal procedures. The broader relevance of the ESG as quality reference for other parts of the world beyond EHEA was also raised.

The Commission will propose and circulate a short text on behalf of the Ad-hoc WG in light of ESG revision; once text agreed on, it will be forwarded to the Structural Working Group.

The need to ensure that links to other transparency tools are properly referenced in the Guide was also stressed, in particular the need to develop key features of ECTS reflecting recent developments in the Bologna Process. Some suggestions were made: the Guide could mention general information on ECVET and redirect to a few important web links; the programme design section should be linked with EQF and NQF; awareness could be raised on Directive for Professional Qualifications; the reference to EUROPASS frameworks and documents should be strengthened.

1. ***Progress update and short discussion on the first draft of group 1 on “Programme design” and group 2 on “Teaching, learning and assessment”***

The Chair continued by pointing out the importance of having more communication between the subgroups on the basis of the circulated documents. The third week of June 2013 was set as a deadline for the subgroups’ contributions.

1. ***Discussion on envisaged structure of the revised Guide***

During the deliberations on the structure of the revised guide the following proposals were made:

* Expand the introduction to make it relevant to different stakeholder groups;
* The structure of the chapters has been outlined in previous meetings and should be reflected in the subgroups’ inputs (e.g. including good practice boxes);
* Some of the annexes need to be deleted: Annex 1, Annex 2 and Annex 3 to be integrated in the main body of the text; Annex 4 should be substituted by links to documents (e.g. link to Diploma Supplement, examples of Learning Agreements and Transcript of Records in Nordplus or other programmes); Annex 5 could reference links to relevant websites of countries that have regulated ECTS in their national legislations;
* Need of glossary should be discussed;

1. ***AOB and closing of the meeting***

* List of “misunderstanding and misconceptions” from the different countries
* Planning of drafting session and next meeting

The Chair suggested creating a drafting group consisting of one member from each of the four subgroups. The drafting group will meet in Brussels from 2-6 September 2013 for drafting the first version of the revised Guide, based on the input received by the four subgroups. The suggestion was endorsed by the members of the WG.

The meeting was closed with the announcement to hold the next meeting of the WG in October 2013. The date of the meeting will be communicated in due time.